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First record of Laughing Gull, *Leucophaeus atricilla* (Linnaeus, 1758) from Bihar

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ABSTRACT

Authors are reporting Laughing Gull, *Leucophaeus atricilla* (Linnaeus, 1758) for the first time from Bihar. This is an exceptional record of *L. atricilla* rarely from non-coastal waterbody.

Keywords: Laughing Gull, First Record, Bihar.

1. INTRODUCTION

Laughing Gull, *Leucophaeus atricilla* (Linnaeus, 1758) is a common breeding bird found on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of most of the United States, the Caribbean, and Mexico. It also breeds in the Gulf of California and along the Pacific coast south to Colima (Burger, 1996; Howell and Webb, 1995). In the boreal winter, it can be found in northern Chile Hoogendoorn, (1993) and coastal Peru. Although at the southernmost point of the species' winter range *L. atricilla* is sporadically found inland in Mexico, but it is almost never found far from coastal waters. According to Hilty and Brown, (1986), the species is common in Colombia and is the most abundant species in Ecuador between December and March. It is a non-breeding visitor to the northern half of the Pacific coast of South America and common in Colombia Hilty and Brown, (1986), fairly common to in northwest Peru and uncommon in the Lima region of west central Peru (Parker et al., 1982).

There are reports of this wanderer from ten European nations up until 1988, as well as from North and West Africa, a number of islands in the Pacific, and even from northeastern Australia (Hoogendoorn and Steinhaus, 1990). This sighting from Bihar constitutes the first record of Laughing Gull recorded on 1 May 2024. However, this is also an exceptional records of *L. atricilla* from Bihar sighted at Gangetic region near Barari samsanghat near Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary and a rare bird Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus* is also sighted for the first time from non-coastal waterbody (GPS Co-ordinates: 25.268551N, 87.042821 E, Elevation: 61.52 ± 100m).

Recently in January 2024, Laughing Gull has been sighted for the first time in the country in flight mode at the Chittari estuary in Kasaragod district by C. Sreekanth. *L. atricilla*, known for its unique laughter-like calls, has migrated from North America to the coastal region of India for the first time and thereafter *L. atricilla* is

sighted by the authors from Gangetic basin in the Bihar. This is an exceptional record, because *L. atricilla* rarely found in non-coastal waterbodies. Amidst a multitude of birds at Barari samsanghat, including Black-headed gull, Brown-headed gull, small pratincole, Whiskered tern, Eurasian curlew, little tern and others, authors noticed a smaller bird with dark red beak and Whimbrel which piqued our interest. Further literature survey and occurrence records on citizen science platforms confirmed that both aforementioned species are not sighted in Gangetic basin in Bihar.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Photographs were taken with the help of Nikon D5600 Camera (200mm-500mm VR Zoom Lens) in day time on 1 May 2024. Taxonomic identification confirmed by relevant literatures through multiple photographs and photographs also uploaded on eBird citizen science portal (Images 1 to 4).



Image 1 Laughing Gull in calling mode with Brown-Headed Gull





Image 2 & 3 Laughing Gull in resting mode



Image 4 Whimbrel in foraging ground

3. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the Gangetic basin multiple factors affecting migratory and native birds' diversity. Poaching, illegal netting and hunting activity are also recorded some times in the locality. It is a matter of speculation as to why the bird migrated non-coastal wetland. It is possible that the bird distracts the path with other migratory birds and searching for a safe foraging area to adjustment. It seems likely that the area has a tremendous potential for finding more hidden species, and visiting birders are urged to check all micro habitats carefully. Birders and officials should focus on record behaviour in new foraging area along with threats to the both newly migrated species aforementioned.

Acknowledgements

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Photographs of bird on eBird

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S171809225>

Video available on following link

https://youtube.com/shorts/W0SqZIdh3Uo?si=TnZokGVTedC9VF_d

Conflicts of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interests.

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Ethical approval

The ethical guidelines in relation with animals are followed in the survey for observation & identification.

Data and materials availability

All data associated with this study are present in the paper.

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